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ABSTRACT

This action research project developed a program for improving the social proficiency of art and music students through the use of specifically taught positive social skills. The targeted population consisted of fifth-grade students from two different elementary school districts. Both schools were located in middle class suburban communities near a large metropolitan area. The problem of poor social skills prevalent in the fine arts students was documented by student behavior checklists, teacher anecdotal records, teacher surveys, and student surveys. Analysis of probable cause data indicated that students demonstrated a lack of skills related to listening, respect, showing kindness, and following directions. Causes were found to include the following: students were not born with social skills; the breakdown of the family unit; problem behaviors; and the media. A review of solution strategies documented by other professionals combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the development of an instructional system which included creating a harmonious classroom environment and teaching social skills. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in improved social skills with the targeted fifth-grade art and music students. This resulted in increased student respect for others and property, improved listening skills and manners, and enhanced overall awareness of proper social behavior. (Contains 4 tables of data and 23 references. Appendixes contain teacher and student surveys, a behavior checklist, and parent informational letters.) (Author/BT)

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IMPROVING THE SOCIAL PROFICIENCY OF ART AND MUSIC STUDENTS THROUGH THE USE OF SPECIFICALLY TAUGHT POSITIVE SOCIAL SKILLS

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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to:

Our Families

Rob, Nick, and Aaron Ciaburri

Aleck and Ernie MacLagan

Gordon, Doug, James, and Jill White

Thanks for all your love, patience, and support.

You are the canvas and concert of our lives! --

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving the social proficiency of art and music students through the use of specifically taught positive social skills. The targeted population consisted of fifth grade students from two different elementary school districts. Both schools were located in middle class suburban communities near a large metropolitan area. The problem of poor social skills prevalent in the fine arts students was documented by student behavior checklists, teacher anecdotal records, teacher surveys, and student surveys.

Analysis of probable cause data indicated that students demonstrated a lack of skills related to listening, respect, showing kindness, and following directions. Causes were found to include that students were not born with social skills, the breakdown of the family unit, problem behaviors, and the media.

A review of solution strategies documented by other professionals combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the development of an instructional system which included creating a harmonious classroom environment and teaching social skills.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in improved social skills with the targeted fifth grade art and music students. This resulted in increased student respect for others and property, improved listening skills and manners, and enhanced overall awareness of proper social behavior.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students in the targeted fifth grade art and music classes exhibit a deficiency in social skills which are displayed through their lack of listening ability, lack of respect for each other, authority, and property. Evidence for the existence of such a problem includes student behavior checklists, teacher anecdotal records, and teacher and student surveys.

Context of the Problem

Intermediate sites A and B are involved in the following research. All information is taken from the 1997 school report card.

Site A

Site A is part of a small but growing district which contains one elementary school and one middle school. The elementary school contains students in grades kindergarten through grade five. The total enrollment is 356, of which 69 are fifth grade students. The average class size is 20 students. Ethnic background of the student population is as follows: 94.9% White, 0.0% African American,4.8% Hispanic, and 0.3% Asian/Pacific Islander. Low income students make up 6.2% of the population. Ninety six and two tenths percent of the total student population attend school everyday.

Site A has two schools, an elementary kindergarten through fifth, and a middle school grades sixth through eighth. The administration consists of one

superintendent, who also acts as principal for the elementary building; and a separate principal for the middle school. The district is run by an elected school board which has monthly meetings.

This site has 35 staff members. The staff is 100% White; 88.4% are female and 11.6% are male. The average teaching experience is 12.2 years with 36.4% of the teachers having a masters degree or above. The pupil teacher ratio is 18:1.

There are three fifth grade teachers. There is also one REI teacher (Regular Education Initiative), whose responsibilities are to aid the fifth grade learning disabled students who are included in the regular fifth grade classrooms.

The school program includes language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical development, health, and fine arts. Drug Awareness Resistance Education, (DARE), is a program fifth graders also experience.

Site A is similar to Site B in that they are both elementary schools. However, Site B is substantially larger than Site A.

Site B

Site B is part of a large, fast growing, technology based, elementary district consisting of four elementary schools and one middle school. The district has purchased a 22 acre site for building yet another elementary school. Site B opened in 1996 to a "state of the art" building. The following year, due to overcrowding, the art teacher lost her art room to a second grade class. Art is now on a cart. There is a significant area housing development expansion.

Site B contains kindergarten through fifth grades. As of October of 1997, the enrollment was 481, which includes 80 students in the three fifth grade classes. The ethnic characteristics are as follows: 88% White, 1.5% African American, 4.6% Hispanic, 5.4% Asian/Pacific Islander. Economically, 3.7% are from low income families. There are 1.7% limited English proficient students; and the attendance rate is

96.5%.

This site has 148 faculty, of which 98.9% are White, and 1.1% are Hispanic. Eighty nine point two percent of the faculty are female, and 10.8% are male. The average teaching experience is 11.3 years, with 45.8% of the teachers having a masters degree or above.

The school program includes language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, health, and fine arts. Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) is also taught at the fifth grade level.

Site B's district consists of five schools, four are elementary (kindergarten through fifth); the other school is a middle school, grades six through eight. The district is run by two interim superintendents, and there is also an assistant superintendent of curriculum. Each school building has it's own principal. This district is also managed by an elected school board.

Surrounding Community

Both sites are located in the same county, approximately seven miles from each other. They are two separate rural communities in water recreational areas. Both sites are located between two major metropolitan cities.

The population of Site A consists of 6,500 people, of which approximately two thirds are professional and the other one third are blue collar. There are changes ahead for this site and its population, however. Change is coming due to large scale housing construction being approved within the school district boundaries. Several developments have been approved for construction which will result in 3164 newly constructed homes. These new developments will house approximately 1582 grade school students. Currently, there are 550 students enrolled in Site A.

The citizens of Site A actively support the district with the Parent Teacher Organization. Other volunteer activities include room mothers, the book fair, and Prime Time, which is a reading program for second graders. The community takes pride in the schools within their district.

The community of Site B is highly residential. The District has little industry and is financed through real estate taxes. The average annual median salary is $47,057.00. The population is 48,000 people. There is a strong sense of being a "small hometown".

The citizens of this community have a strong desire to help in the neighborhoods and in the schools. Parents were instrumental in selecting the curriculum. They also had a voice in how the school holidays were celebrated and how the school boundaries should be divided.

Finally, R.E.S.P.E.C.T. is a program shared and demonstrated by many students, parents and staff. The R.E.S.P.E.C.T. qualities are: responsibility, effort, self control, pride, enthusiasm, consideration, and trust.

National Context Of The Problem

For the past several years, teachers have noticed that students exhibit a lack of social skills amongst each other. Social skills include the ability to get along with oneself and others in an appropriate way. According to Gross (1994):

> Some form of structured intervention appeared to be needed to make the transition to fifth grade a smoother one. The problems of increased conflict and poor academic achievement emanating from weak self esteem and a concomitant low regard for others, especially those who were racially and ethnically different, needed to be recognized and dealt with. (p. 15)

Assisting children in reducing disruptive behavior is a critical task not only because misbehavior interferes with student learning, but also because it impairs the relationship between teacher and student (Rathvon, 1990). Students lack of social skills and misbehavior, "continues to be a significant issue in schools across the country" (Farner, 1996, p. 27).

Lack of classroom social skills does exist around the country. Evidence of this was documented at each site. Causes for this problem were also documented.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

This project was conducted by a kindergarten through eighth grade art specialist and a third through fifth grade music teacher at two different sites. The targeted fifth grade classes go to art and music once a week. The art and music teachers have experienced some of these students lacking social skills in the fine art classrooms. The problem of a lack of social skills in the fifth grade students was also documented through a teacher survey, a student survey, student behavior checklists, and teacher anecdotal records.

Teacher Survey

A survey was given to the four fifth grade classroom teachers (Appendix A) concerning the social skills of their students. There was a 100% response rate. Several conclusions could be drawn from the results.

All of the teachers agreed that students will usually stay on task, but can be kind or rude to each other depending on circumstances. Three out of the four teachers surveyed felt their students were respectful to each other, and that they listened to directions most of the time. Half of the teachers felt students always respected authority, respected each others property, and shared. The other half felt the above occurred only occasionally. Three of the teachers agreed there was never any physical aggression among their students, however, one teacher stated that in her classroom students lacked respect for each other.

This shows that there is a problem of a lack of social skills among fifth graders. Teachers surveyed gave evidence that the problem does exist. A student survey was also given to measure how students felt about respect. It included questions relating to social skills between peers and teachers.

Student Survey

At Sites A and B, a student respect survey (Appendix B) was individually administered by the art and music teachers to the targeted fifth grade students during the first week of school. Students were asked a variety of questions concerning social skills. Table 1 presents the results from that survey.

Table 1

Sites A and B Student Responses From Respect Survey September 1998

Behavior Category	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Hurt Feelings	38%	50%	50%	45%	12%	5%
Sharing	38%	50%	62%	50%		
Friendly	52%	56%	48%	44%		
Manners						
Using "please"	67%	68%	33%	32%		
Using "thank you"	57%	50%	43%	50%		
Listening Skills						
Enter room quietly	43%	59%	57%	29%		12%
Quiet when teacher speaks	76%	91%	24%	9%		
Quiet when students speak	48%	50%	52%	50%		
Classroom Neatness	33%	82%	53%	18%	14%	

Of the 21 students surveyed at Site A, more than half have hurt feelings when treated unkindly, however, 12% seemed not bothered by unkindness from their peers. Most students shared with others and were friendly toward each other. The majority of students exhibited good manners. More than half listen quietly while the art teacher was speaking, but under half of the targeted fifth grade class come to art class quietly, and were quiet when another student was speaking. A little over half of the art students said they sometimes cleaned their area after class, but a small percentage said they never cleaned their work place.

Out of the 22 music students surveyed at Site B, 95% experienced some sort of hurt feelings when treated badly by others, but 5% said they did not experience these feelings. The majority of students were always friendly, usually shared with their peers, and used the words "please" and "thank you". Almost all students give the music teacher their full attention when she is speaking. Most listen when their peers are speaking. However, a small percentage enter the music room in a disruptive manner. Classroom neatness does not seem to be a problem at this site.

In comparing Site A with Site B, the fine arts students were lacking in certain social skills. These included being friendly and kind to each other, listening when peers have permission to speak, and being responsible for cleaning up their work area before class ends. This shows that the problem of a lack of social skills exists because students surveyed agreed that they lack respect for their peers and each others property. The results of the student survey supports the results of the teacher survey. Both student and teacher surveys showed that all students do not listen all of the time when the teacher is speaking, and they do not always share.

Student behavior checklists and teacher anecdotal records supported the fact that students were lacking in certain social skills. The results are documented in the next section.

Student Behavior Checklist and Teacher Anecdotal Records

Once a week, for six consecutive weeks, a behavior checklist (Appendix C) was kept by both the art teacher at Site A and the music teacher at Site B. Table 2 presents the results from this checklist.

Table 2

Sites A and B Student Behavior Checklist October through November 1998

Behavior Category	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Listens to directions	96%	95%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Disrespect to school property	1%		9%		90%	
Disrespect to peers	2%	4%	41%	30%	51%	66%
Stays on task		97%		2%		1%

At Site A, it was noted that some students did not always listen to directions, some often disrespected school property, and some occasionally were disrespectful to their peers. At Site B, the music teacher noted that some students did not always listen to directions, did not always stay on task, and were sometimes disrespectful to each other. In comparing their checklists, the art and music teacher have found that their students have the most difficulty in listening quietly to the teachers' directions and being respectful to each other.

At Site A the art teacher did not include "staying on task" as a concern in the art room. Students are usually motivated to stay on task due to the hands on art projects. However, the art teacher did document whether or not the students respected school property because they use supplies from the art room. At Site B the music teacher documented that staying on task was more important in music class. The reason is, that in music class students are expected to participate vocally therefore they need to stay on task. Respecting the property in the music room does not present a concern.

In the anecdotal records of both sites, the art and music teachers documented that they are constantly reminding some students how to be good listeners. Even though the majority of students are quiet and do listen to the teacher, there are those few that don't listen and are a constant disruption to the class. Both teachers also documented that they notice certain students will sometimes tease other classmates.

There are probable causes that contribute to a lack of social skills of fifth graders in the fine arts classrooms. These will be discussed in the next section.

Probable Causes

In order to fully comprehend the probable causes of the lack of social skills observed in fifth graders in the art and music rooms, it is important to understand why these behaviors occur. Being a fifth grader seems to be a very difficult period in a child's life. According to Gross (1994):

> The fifth grade teachers reported that they experienced a great deal of difficulty in molding their classes into a cohesive group. These problems persisted throughout the school year diminishing somewhat as the children had an opportunity to know one another better. The transition from 4th to 5th grade was also marked by an increase in the number of referrals to the office for behavioral problems. Sixteen students in the fourth grade were sent to the principal. That number grew to 79 in the

> fifth grade. There was a corresponding increase in the number of in-school suspensions from 3 in the 4th grade to 49 in the 5th grade. This trend continued with out of school suspensions rising from 0 at the 4th grade level to 34 in 5th grade. (p. 15)

The following are causes for the lack of social skills in students: being born without social skills, family breakdown, and the media.

Not Born With Social Skills

So what are the causes of poor behavior of ten and eleven year olds? "We are not born with instinctive behaviors that help us interact the first time we are placed in a social situation" (Ostlund, 1992, p. 31). Parents should be the ones to instruct children in these skills, however, this often does not occur.

Often when a child displays unacceptable behavior, they are not disciplined by the parent. Some parents do not discipline their children because they do not want to feel guilty about the discipline or seem like the mean parent. According to Gosman (1990):

> On the rare occasion we do discipline, it disturbs us, even though we logically know it shouldn't. And we would rather have the poor behavior recur than live with the negative feeling we get when we enforce consequences. (p. 109)

If the parents do not correct the poor behavior of their child, the child will not understand that their behavior was unacceptable, and they will not learn proper behavior. If the improper behavior is ignored, it will likely become worse at some future date.

The breakdown of the family unit was also found to be a cause for children lacking social skills. When the home life is disrupted, the child's behavior suffers.

Family Breakdown

In the targeted sites, it has been noted that students come from various family backgrounds. Some students come from the standard traditional "mom and dad family unit". However, more students are not in that traditional environment. Some children come from divorced single parent situations, and others live with foster parents due to family problems. These situations affect behavior of students in the classroom.

When parents separate or divorce, children are affected. Sometimes children feel they are the reason for the family failure. Children will often display poor behavior in school because they are upset with what is happening at home. School work, peers and teacher relationships can be affected in a negative way. "If severe problems are to be avoided, parents need to put their own needs aside to help these vulnerable children through the divorce transition with patience and care" (Adler, 1988, p. 95).

Poor behaviors in the art and music classrooms have been documented and were believed to be caused by family breakdown. For example, a fifth grade art student at Site A was being so constantly disruptive that he had to be removed from the classroom. The art teacher at Site A was later informed that the student was having behavior difficulties due to a parental divorce. In a report done by Neel and Cessna (1993):

> Children with behavior problems often act in ways that are frustrating to teachers. In rural schools, where the diversity of educational need teachers are required to manage is large, problem behaviors can be especially challenging. As a teacher, one of our jobs is to teach children how to act at school. Many of the children we teach, however, bring to school a wide range of attitudes and behaviors that often cause problems. A difficult task for all of us is to respond to these behaviors in positive ways. (p. 30)

As reported, breakdown of the family plays an important role in causing the negative behaviors of children in school. The media was also found to be a reason for problem behavior.

The Media

Many people wonder whether or not television and various types of rock music influence negative behavior in children. It has been noticed in the fifth grade art and music classrooms that some students have an inappropriate attitude. When questioned as to why they are having a "bad day", they sometimes respond with the statement that they stayed up too late watching television.

Rock musicians often sing or rap about inappropriate behaviors in their songs. Songs of this nature can have a negative affect on children. "Many songs include lyrics that may not be appropriate for young children or that send messages that may be dangerous..." (Weinstein,1991, p. 265).

The media will often magnify the human errors of celebrities in our society. Television, radio, and the newspapers all exploit inappropriate behavior. "Research data support past warnings of the potential negative effects associated with frequent television watching...writers have cited disturbing trends in the behavior of adolescents subjected to years of unsupervised media exposure" (Cohen, 1993, p. 103).

This is a problem, because children will imitate behaviors of people they admire. If their idols exhibit inappropriate behaviors, children will think they can behave that way too.

Not being born with social skills, family breakdown, and the media all have a hand in influencing negative behavior in children. Thus, children are lacking in all or many desirable social skills.

Solutions for the lack of social skills in the fifth grade art and music classrooms include creating a caring culture and total school environment, teaching positive social

skills, and using the media as a positive tool. These will be discussed in depth.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The topics for discussion that have been found to be solutions for students who lack social skills include: creating a caring culture and a total school environment, teaching positive social skills through cooperative learning and the multiple intelligences, and using the media as a positive tool.

In a caring culture, people cooperate and work together. Children need to be exposed to this type of environment.

Create A Caring Culture

It is important to empower children to create a caring culture in a world of differences. The following poem summarizes the essence of positive classroom rapport.

> We need all the different kinds of people we can find,
> To make freedom's dream come true,
> So as I learn to like the differences in me,
> I learn to like the differences in you. (Martin, 1987, p. 66)

A caring culture incorporates a place where people care about each other by showing respect to each other and their property. They also listen to and respect each others opinions and ideas. In a caring culture, people may not always agree with others, but they are respectful to them.

The creation of a caring culture in the classroom should begin in the preschool classroom and continue through the high school years. Children need to be taught to respect each other regardless of race, religion, or social economic groups. According to Salkowski (1994) :

> Given the opportunity to grow in an environment of cooperation and mutual respect, and to make decisions and choices for themselves, children would become the pioneers of real and lasting peace in the world. With a healthy spirit and a clear vision, they would see the absurdity of war and the certainty of peace. They alone would posses the confidence and the strength of character to translate thoughts into positive action. (p. 32)

By living in a caring and positive environment, children as they mature, would become humanitarians. They would be charitable and compassionate individuals.

"If education recognizes the intrinsic value of the child's personality and provides an environment suited to spiritual growth, we have the revelation of an entirely new child, whose astonishing characteristics can eventually contribute to the betterment of the world" (Wolf, 1989, p. 66). Bringing about peace is the work of education. Peace comes from understanding how to treat others. Respect is essential.

In a recent article by Schneider, (1996), it was stated that:

> If we want to nurture students who will grow into lifelong learners, into self-directed seekers, into the kind of adults who are morally responsible even when someone is not looking, then we need to give them opportunities to practice making choices and reflection on the outcomes. Responsibility means owning one's failures and successes-small, medium, and large. Teaching our students that we control ourselves, that

> we choose our fulfillment or frustration, makes the critical difference. (p. 26)

Realizing that a caring culture is crucial to the development of caring children, teachers can help by developing an instructional system that focuses on children with behavior problems. According to Neel & Cessna (1993):

> Most programs for controlling behavior focus on reducing or eliminating behaviors. Instead, teaching appropriate behaviors can become part of the instructional component. Teachers can do this by evaluating the intent of behavior and helping children achieve their intent in socially acceptable ways. (p. 30)

To create a caring classroom, a teacher can model kind words, and actions. She or he can correct students who are unkind, and insist that exhibiting kindness is required in the classroom.

Making the classroom a positive and safe place to be will help promote a harmonious environment. This should be done by the teacher's good example, and reinforcement of desired social skills. Teachers can make their classroom a place where students feel accepted, unafraid, and willing to learn.

Creating a caring culture is the first solution to help students learn positive social skills. The second solution is to create a total school environment.

Create A Total School Environment

One of the ways to create a comfortable classroom is to... "create a total school environment..", where there is support from the principal and staff. If the school has a policy where respect is modeled and enforced, students will learn correct behaviors. The principal and teachers must be the leaders and guide the students on a daily basis. Only with cooperation from the administration, can classroom environments be created where students will not feel threatened or afraid of making mistakes. "You

must create a democratic environment, in which students exercise considerable autonomy and self-control, help make classroom decisions, participate in creating rules and revising them, discuss and help solve classroom problems, and develop a sense of membership in, and responsibility for their community" (Cassanova, 1989, p. 24). This type of comfortable environment gives students the freedom to help in the management of the classroom. The teacher is the facilitator. In an article by Castle and Rogers (1993):

> Creating classroom rules together can be a very meaningful learning experience for children and teachers and can help establish a positive sense of classroom community. Teachers who commit time and effort to the process have found it benefits children's relationships and increases understanding of what it means to participate as a constructive member of a classroom community. (p. 80)

To promote positive classroom conditions teachers can give students a say in what happens in the classroom. Class meetings are a way to do this. "A significant part of moral development comes through dialogue, reflection on experience, and looking at how our behavior affects others" (Kohlberg, 1989, p. 23).

Having a class meeting is one way the teacher and students can work together to create rules and consequences for their classroom community. In this way, everyone in the classroom participates in organizing their environment. The teacher makes sure that rules are enforced and that students receive consequences if rules are broken.

It would be the responsibility of the teacher to "correct the conditions of the classroom life that foster aggression...thus teachers need to sensitize themselves to these conditions and work to eliminate them" (Kauffman & Burbach, 1997, p. 324).

Teachers need to be aware of situations where there could be problems. For example: If two students aren't getting along, they shouldn't sit next to each other. However, the teacher could use strategies to get the students to tolerate each other. One strategy might be to have both students be teacher helpers during the school day. Most students welcome and enjoy having the responsibility of being the "helper". By placing both students in this situation, giving them duties to perform together and with careful guidance on the part of the teacher, they may become more tolerant of each other and even develop a friendship.

According to Jones (1996):

> Teachers need to demonstrate that they mean business so that their students know who owns the classroom. Meaning business, however, is done with the body, not the mouth. Body language is the expression of thoughts, feelings, and intentions-the language that delivers the powerful message of who we really are. Remember that calm is strength and upset is weakness. (p. 26)

Sometimes a look is worth a thousand words, especially if students already know the rules of the classroom. Often a student who is disruptive or misbehaving will look at the teacher to see they are being watched. A teacher needs to be aware of what is happening in the classroom at all times.

"Give children a sense of your vision for the tone of the classroom" (Charney, 1998, p. 93). Teachers need to let their students know what is expected of them. Creating rules and consequences together the first week of school will let students know what is acceptable classroom behavior. Students walking into a classroom have no idea of what is expected unless rules are made and the teacher explains and models appropriate and alternative behavior.

A teacher can teach good behavior by modeling appropriate social skills. The third solution to having students acquire positive social skills is to teach them.

Teach Social Skills

A teacher should teach the social skills that students need to learn and demonstrate. Social skills desirable for a harmonious classroom where respect is a priority include; good listening skills, self control, and kindness to others. According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1986):

> If we expect students to work together, we must teach them social skills just as purposefully and precisely as we teach them academic skills. Acquiring social skills is essential for building and maintaining an enduring family, a successful career, and lasting friendships. Therefore, learning in cooperative groups requires students to develop and use the social skills that are necessary for leading fruitful and fulfilling lives. (p. 34)

All children can learn social skills through cooperative learning, even those who have disabilities. The following are four basic steps for using cooperative learning to teach social skills which have been found to be effective: "First, identify specific social skills for improvement; second, define social skills for students in specific terms that match their level of concept development; thirdly, design and implement cooperative activities; and fourth, processing at the close of the activity" (Fad & Ross, 1995, p. 29-31). This can be done by thorough planning on the part of the teacher and seeing where, in the lessons to be taught, cooperative learning can be implemented to benefit the students.

Students can be put into cooperative groups and taught a particular social skill through various strategies. Cooperative groups help teach positive social skills. Students are assigned jobs in the groups which gives them a sense of responsibility

toward the group and also respect from group members. Students take ownership of their job and will strive to do succeed. By being a productive member of a cooperative group, students social behavior usually improves. The cooperative strategies, looks like/sounds like could be used to teach good listening skills, a mind map can help students define respect, and the agree/disagree chart can be used to help students analyze kind actions and words.

Two multiple intelligence areas that are important for development of positive social skills are the interpersonal and intrapersonal. With the interpersonal intelligence, students learn to cooperate and work together toward a common goal. The intrapersonal intelligence teaches and reinforces in students how to value their time to work alone to seek out their individuality and to develop self acceptance.

Also by developing interpersonal, intrapersonal, and practical decision making skills, "children's capacity for sound social judgment and appropriate personal decision making become as important as their basic academic abilities" (Branden-Muller & Elias, 1994, p. 7). Children need to learn to work together as well as alone. By working in a group situation, children will learn to listen to each other, work together, and cooperate with each other. By learning to work alone children will be introduced to individual expression and respect themselves for who they are.

By learning to make decisions, children also build self esteem. "These skills, and general instructional techniques to foster their development, are placed under the rubric of life skills..." (Branden-Muller & Elias, 1994, p. 7). By learning to get along with others at a young age, children will be more successful in their relationships when they become adults. These life skills include a positive sense of self worth, development of good work habits, motivation, good values, and respect for others.

The fourth solution to having students learn positive social skills is through the media. Television and videos can provide good examples of desirable ways for

children to behave.

The Media

It has been noted that the media, including videos and television, has "significant effects on behavior" (Cohen, 1993, p. 103). For example, the show, "Mr. Rogers", depicts the use of good manners and respect for others. Television has been valued "as a means of focusing and exercising a calming and relaxing effect among children" (Elias & Taylor, 1995, p. 14). Children can see good examples of how to live a good life by watching certain shows on television where the characters model good values in their life. Examples of shows where good values are displayed are "Home Improvement", "Sabrina", and "Boy Meets World".

Creating a caring culture and school environment, teaching positive social skills through cooperative learning and the multiple intelligences, and using the media in a positive way are solutions for students who lack social skills. Fifth grade art and music students will be exposed to social skills which will include cooperative group work, teacher modeling, and instruction of positive social skills necessary to have a harmonious fine arts classroom.

The following objective, processes, and action plan will be implemented.

Project Objective and Process Statements

As a result of teaching social skills through cooperative learning and multiple intelligences, during September, 1998, through December, 1998, the fifth grade targeted art and music classes will increase positive social skills. This will be measured by teacher anecdotal records, student behavior checklists, and teacher and student surveys.

In order to accomplish the targeted objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Development and implementation of tools and procedures that promote

positive social skills.

2. Creating activities from the multiple intelligences that will help to foster positive social skills.
3. Initiation of cooperative activities to reinforce learned social skills.

Project Action Plan

I. Develop and implement tools and procedures that promote positive social skills. (In September):

A. Administer student and teacher (P. E., fifth grade classroom, computer, music or art) surveys to provide baseline data.

B. Design cooperative learning base groups-Getting to know each other: Business Card (15 minutes).

C. Teacher modeling of social skills to students.

1. Listening-Who is a good listener? (five minutes)
   a. What is good listening? Define.
   b. How does one become a good listener?
      1. A good listener gives eye contact.
      2. A good listener is quiet when someone is speaking or performing.
      3. Teach: Looks Like/Sounds Like (five minutes)
2. Respect (In October)
   a. Define respect - R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (10 minutes)
      Qualities include responsibility, effort, self control, pride, enthusiasm, consideration, and trust.
   b. A responsible person is one that can be trusted with school property.
   c. Effort-do the best you can.

d. Self control-demonstrate appropriate behavior.

e. Pride-be proud of what you do.

f. Enthusiasm-have a good attitude.

g. Consideration- show concern for others.

h. Trust-be a honest person.

3. Kindness-what is it? (five minutes)

a. Define kindness

b. Model kindness

c. Student examples of kind acts.

1. Peer teaching

2. Sharing

4. Following directions (five minutes)

a. Definition of following directions.

1. Modeling of following directions.

a. Staying on task.

b. Teacher reinforcement of listening skills.

D. Assessed by Teacher Anecdotal Records and Behavior Checklists.

II. Creation of two multiple intelligence activities to further reinforce social skills. (In November):

A. Interpersonal (20 minutes)

1. Reinforce group cooperation

2. Students will listen to directions, work as a group, share, and take turns. This will be accomplished by drawing to music.

B. Intrapersonal (20 minutes)

1. Defining to students-What is individual expression?

2. Students will listen to a musical piece and reflect on their

feelings by doing a drawing and writing a sentence about their drawing.

C. Assessed by Teacher Anecdotal Records and Behavior Checklists.

III. Reinforcement of the social skills taught through cooperative activities. (In December)

A. Listening-Looks Like/Sounds Like (five minutes)

B. Respect-Mind Map (10 minutes)

C. Kindness-Agree/Disagree Chart (10 minutes)

D. Following Directions-Sequence on how to enter the art or music room to prepare for class. (10 minutes)

E. Assessed by Teacher Anecdotal Records and Behavior Checklists

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of these interventions, students as a class will discuss what they have learned, and repeat the student social skills survey to determine if social skills have improved. The fifth grade classroom teachers will repeat the teacher survey. The researchers will assess social skills through the student behavior checklist. Both pre and post data collection will be conducted using this assessment plan.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase positive social skills of fifth grade art and music students. The implementation of a social skills program was selected to effect the desired change. This objective was accomplished through incorporating the teaching of positive skills during the art and music classes. The tools and strategies used to accomplish this will be discussed.

A large portion of the intervention was implemented by the art and music teachers modeling positive social skills to the targeted fifth grade art and music students. The skills chosen to be taught to the classes included different types of listening lessons to prepare students to be able to get the most out of their art and music lesson. These included a description on who is a good listener, the definition of good listening, and how one becomes a good listener by giving eye contact and being silent and attentive when someone is speaking or performing. To further reinforce the concept of good listening, the strategy of what good listening "Looks Like/Sounds Like" was drafted on the chalk board with teacher guidance and student participation.

It was important to the art and music teachers that their students understood the concept of " R.E.S.P.E.C.T." To do this, the respect qualities of responsibility, effort, self control, pride, enthusiasm, consideration, and trust were defined. The art teacher modeled to the art students how to show these qualities in the art room. Examples included being responsible for and with school property, putting forth ones best effort

in a project, doing the best you can, therefore having pride in ones work, and being considerate of others working around you. The music teacher taught her students specific songs about the respect qualities. Songs included A Better You...A Better Me where students sang about how to be a better person. Another song students sang was Expect Respect, where they learned how to give and receive respect. A final song was about consideration where students learned how to care for others through the words of the song.

Students also learned about the characteristics of kindness. The art and music teachers defined and modeled kindness and kind acts to their students. After students understood what kind acts were, they then modeled kind acts to their peers. These included helping each other through peer teaching and sharing. During an art class students were given the opportunity to help others who were having difficulty with their project. Students were also asked to share art materials with others at their work tables. The music students were given an opportunity to teach musical hand motions that went along with songs they were learning to their classmates. Music students demonstrated acts of kindness by sharing their music sheets with each other.

The targeted fine arts fifth grade students also learned the correct way to follow directions. The art and music teachers defined following directions to their students by saying the following: Following directions is "doing what is asked of you in the correct order, so you can accomplish a task". The reason directions should be followed is so an end result can be achieved correctly. Teachers also modeled following directions by showing students how to stay on task; the art teacher showed the students how to use their art time wisely to complete art work. Through the use of a sequence chart posted in the music room, music students were reinforced daily on how to stay on task by following directions. Both teachers reinforced following directions by constant reminders to students on appropriate listening skills.

Positive social skills were reinforced by creating and doing two multiple intelligence activities with the targeted fifth grade art and music students. These activities were in the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

In the interpersonal activity, the art and music teachers wanted to reinforce group cooperation. This was accomplished by having students listen to directions, work in a group, share, and take turns. Art and music students were put into cooperative groups and drawing materials were distributed. They were then instructed to listen to a musical composition by Mozart for three minutes. Then as a group, students shared ideas and drew a group picture expressing their reactions to the music.

The introduction to the intrapersonal activity focused on explaining to students what individual expression means. Individual expression is expressing one's own feelings through reflection or action. Individually, art and music students listened to a contemporary musical piece by Aaron Copeland that had a western style. Students then were given time to interpret their feelings through drawing and writing.

To strengthen the positive social skills that the art and music teachers wanted to cultivate, strategies were used to reinforce the social skills previously taught. These included Looks Like/Sounds Like for listening skills, a Mind Map for respect reinforcement, an Agree/Disagree Chart to define kind actions, and a Sequence Chart on the correct way to enter an art or music room. These strategies were led by the teachers who wrote student responses on the board.

The art and music teachers worked with their students on positive social skills once a week during their art or music class. If there was no time for a social skill lesson before art instruction, it was integrated while children were working on their art projects. If a conflict arose and music class did not meet, sessions were made up the next music class.

To further reinforce positive social skills in their fine arts students, deviations in the original action plan resulting in additional activities were added by the art and music teacher. They both discussed with their students the four components for success. These include purpose, planning, practice, and patience; and can be accomplished by having respect for oneself. Also, in a concert program, music students sang and recited poems about respect for oneself and others. Results of the positive social skills interventions will now be discussed.

Presentation And Analysis Of Results

The student survey, teacher survey, student behavior checklists, and teacher anecdotal records administered in the beginning and end of the research will now be compared.

Student Survey

To determine whether or not the targeted fifth grade art and music students improved in their social skills, a post survey was administered in January (see Table 2). The original 21 students at Site A and the original 22 students at Site B repeated the student respect survey. Most students from Sites A and B feel bad when someone is unkind to them. In the pre survey, there was a small percentage of students who indicated that they never experienced hurt feelings at all. The researchers feel that students are now more conscious of how to treat others, and will therefore be more kind in there relationships with others. In sharing with one another and being friendly to each other, both sites stayed the same as compared to the first survey. Site A improved in how often students used the words "please" and "thank you", but Site B did not improve in their manners. Both sites improved in their listening skills and classroom neatness. None of the students responded in the "never" column. Classroom teachers were also surveyed.

Table 2

Sites A and B Student Responses From Respect Survey September 1998 and January 1999

Behavior Category	Site A Pre A	Site A Pre S	Site A Pre N	Site A Post A	Site A Post S	Site B Pre A	Site B Pre S	Site B Pre N	Site B Post A	Site B Post S
Hurt Feelings	38%	50%	12%	40%	60%	50%	45%	5%	75%	25%
Sharing	38%	62%		38%	62%	50%	50%		50%	50%
Friendly	52%	48%		52%	48%	50%	50%		50%	50%
Manners										
"please"	67%	33%		75%	25%	68%	32%		56%	44%
"thank you"	57%	43%		75%	25%	50%	50%		50%	50%
Listening Skills										
Enter rm. quietly	43%	57%		51%	49%	59%	29%	12%	60%	40%
Quiet when										
teacher speaks	76%	24%		93%	7%	91%	9%		93%	7%
student speaks	48%	52%		53%	47%	50%	50%		60%	40 %
Classroom										
Neatness	33%	53%	14%	48%	52%	82%	18%		95%	5%

Note. A=Always; S=Sometimes; N=Never; rm.=room.

Teacher Survey

A post survey was also given to the four fifth grade classroom teachers to see if they felt their students social skills had improved (see Table 3). At Site A, three fifth grade classroom teachers were again surveyed, as they all see the targeted fifth grade during the regular school day for various classes. At Site B the targeted fifth grade classroom teacher repeated the survey. Only one teacher at Site B was

surveyed, because the targeted fifth grade class is a self contained room. According to the surveys, teachers at both sites see some physical aggression among their fifth graders. However, they said now they notice that all students respect each others property, whereas previously, only half of the teachers stated that students respected each others property. All teachers feel that all students now show more respect for authority as compared to only half of the students previously. All teachers feel their students now listen to their directions. Teachers at Site A feel that more than half of the students now respect each other. Site B stayed the same. Teachers at both sites feel their students still share with each other only half of the time. The results from the behavior checklist supported the teacher survey.

Behavior Checklist

The art and music teacher did a behavior checklist with their targeted fifth grade classes from September 1998, to December, 1998. The teachers wanted to document student behavior to see if positive social skill interventions would have an effect on student manners. The three categories that the teachers concentrated on were disrespecting authority, peers, and property.

Table 4 shows that at Site A, October was a poor month for student respect for authority, however at Site B, students began the school year in September with poor respect for their teacher. At both Sites, once positive social skill interventions began there was an improvement in student respect for authority. In looking at this table, lack of respect for others at Site A started with no occurrences in September, increased in October, then tapered off at the end of the interventions. Site B began the school year with some disrespect for peers, but as interventions progressed showed definite improvement. The table shows that art students at Site A started the year showing respect for property, but as the months progressed some disrespect for property was noted. Music students at Site B started the year like the art students by showing a

similar trend in respect for property. When interventions were over, Site B students had no occurrences of disrespect for property.

Table 3

Targeted Fifth Grade Teacher Survey Pre and Post Data Results

	Site A						Site B					
	Pre			Post			Pre			Post		
Behavior Category	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N
Students on task	3				1	2	1				1	
Respect-												
others	3			1	2			1		1		
teacher	1	2		3			1			1		
property	1	2		3			1			1		
Listens	3			3			1			1		
Sharing	1	2		1	2			1			1	
Physical Aggr.			3			3		1			1	

Note. Numbers refer to numbers of teachers surveyed at each Site. A=Always; S=Sometimes; N=Never; Aggr.=aggression.

In the art and music teachers student behavior checklists, both teachers felt students improved in their social skills. Anecdotal records showed general improvement in student character. The art teacher noticed that students are now more conscious of how they treat others. Some students will even apologize to each other if they catch themselves being rude to classmates or the teacher. The music teacher noticed an improvement in audience social skills with her targeted fifth grade class.

They attended a rehearsal for a third and fourth grade concert group and were quiet and attentive to the performers. The following conclusions and recommendations were made based on the data discussed.

Table 4

Targeted Fifth Grade Student Behavior Checklist September-December 1998

Behavior Category	Site A				Site B			
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Disrespect-								
Authority	10%	30%	05%	05%	30%	10%	05%	0%
Peers	0%	35%	05%	05%	15%	0%	05%	0%
Property	0%	10%	05%	05%	0%	05%	05%	0%

Note. Percentages refer to monthly occurrences.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the positive social skills intervention, several conclusions and recommendations can be made. Both fine arts teachers felt this project was very successful and would do it again. Both teachers feel their students benefited from the interventions, and that students are now more aware of how to behave in various social settings. Settings include the art and music room, and concert situations as a member of an audience or a performer. Students also learned how to be kinder to each other and how to be a positive influence in the classroom.

The teachers concluded that students should be taught positive social skills in the fine arts. Art students need to know how to respect other students and teachers, share, and respect art supplies and the art room. This is important because without

positive social skills in the art classroom, learning will be interrupted and students' art education will be diminished.

Music students need to know classroom and concert etiquette in being a performer and how to be a member of an audience. The social skills learned in being a performer alone or with a group, or as a member of an audience is a life long lesson Students also learn to appreciate and respect the efforts and talents of others.

Recommendations would be to continue to integrate positive social skills in the fine arts classrooms on an ongoing basis, through teacher instruction and modeling Recommendations would also be for the fine arts teachers to work with the fifth grade teachers on a respect program that could be implemented by the fifth grade teachers in the classroom. If this could be done, fifth graders would constantly have positive social skills reinforced throughout their educational day and become kinder and more respectful students. This would also have an impact on improving the lack of classroom social skills that exists across the country.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

TEACHER SURVEY

Please answer: always, sometimes, or never to answer the following questions.

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. Do your students stay on task?			
2. Do your students show respect to each other?			
3. Do your students show respect to authority?			
4. Do your students listen to directions?			
5. Do your students show respect to other students property?			
6. Do you observe students being kind to each other?			
7. Is there any physical aggression among your students?			
8. Do your students make rude comments to each other?			
9. Do your students share?			
10. Is your classroom a harmonious place?			

APPENDIX B

STUDENT ART AND MUSIC RESPECT SURVEYS

Fifth Grade Art Survey

Please *Circle* Always, Sometimes, or Never to the following questions.

1. Do you feel bad when someone is unkind to you?	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. Do you "share"?	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. Are you friendly to others?	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. When someone does something nice for you, do you say "thank you"?	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. Do you come to art class quietly, ready to work?	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. Do you listen when the art teacher is speaking?	Always	Sometimes	Never
7. Do you leave your space clean at the end of class?	Always	Sometimes	Never
8. When you ask for something, do you use the word "please"?	Always	Sometimes	Never
9. Are you quiet when another student has permission to speak?	Always	Sometimes	Never
10. Do you give positive comments to others in your class?	Always	Sometimes	Never

Fifth Grade Music Survey

Please *Circle* Always, Sometimes, or Never to the following questions.

1. Do you feel bad when someone is unkind to you?	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. Do you "share"?	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. Are you friendly to others?	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. When someone does something nice for you, do you say "thank you"?	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. Do you come to music class quietly, ready to work?	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. Do you listen when the music teacher is speaking?	Always	Sometimes	Never
7. Do you leave your space clean at the end of class?	Always	Sometimes	Never
8. When you ask for something, do you use the word "please"?	Always	Sometimes	Never
9. Are you quiet when another student has permission to speak?	Always	Sometimes	Never
10. Do you give positive comments to others in your class?	Always	Sometimes	Never

APPENDIX C

BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

Student Behavior Checklist

Students	Stays on Task	Listens to Directions	Shares Supplies	Takes Turns	Disrespects Authority	Disrespects School Property	Disrespects Peers	Other
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.								
14.								
15.								
16.								
17.								
18.								
19.								
20.								
21.								
22.								
23.								
24.								
25.								

APPENDIX D

PARENT INFORMATIONAL LETTERS

August, 1998

Dear Parents,

I am presently working on my masters degree in Teaching and Leadership from St. Xavier University. One of the graduation requirements is to complete an action research project. My project is to help promote positive social skills among fifth graders. Your child's class will be participating in social skills activities that will be part of the regular art class experience. Data relating to these activities will be collected. Classroom photographs may be taken of your child to be put in my professional portfolios, but your child will not be formally identified in the results.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's involvement in this project, please contact me at school. The number is 587-2632. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jeannette T. White
Art Teacher

September, 1998 46

Dear Parents,

I am presently working on my masters degree in Teaching and Leadership from St. Xavier University. One of the program requirements is to complete an action research project My project is to help promote positive social skills among fifth graders. Your child's class will be participating in social skills activities that will be part of the regular music class experience Data relating to these activities will be collected. Classroom photographs may be taken of your child to be put in my professional portfolios, but your child will not be formally identified in the results

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's involvement in this project, please contact me at school. The number is 223-3656. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Chris Ciaburri
Music Teacher